



TITLE:

<News> Mahale Research 50th Anniversary

AUTHOR(S):

Hosaka, Kazuhiko

CITATION:

Hosaka, Kazuhiko. <News> Mahale Research 50th Anniversary. Pan Africa News 2015, 22(1): 2-3

ISSUE DATE:

2015-06

URL:

<http://hdl.handle.net/2433/198898>

RIGHT:

Copyright © Pan Africa News.

<NEWS>

Mahale Research 50th Anniversary*Kazuhiko Hosaka*

Co-chairman, Mahale Wildlife Conservation Society,
c/o Kamakura Women's University, Japan
(E-mail: hosaka@kamakura-u.ac.jp)

A half century has passed since Junichiro Itani and his students met in September 1965 at the Kasakati Basin and decided to embark on a challenge of habituating wild chimpanzees of the Mahale Mountains (Itani 1970). Mahale had been a prospective candidate site for a long-term chimpanzee research since Itani went on his first expedition to Tanganyika in 1960 with Kinji Imanishi, his predecessor as the project leader (Itani 1961). However, it took the research team 4 years to reach Mahale until Kosei Izawa finally visited Kasoje just before the meeting (Izawa 1977). The initial priority of the team was to habituate chimpanzees living in savannah-woodland areas to the northeast of Mahale because researchers aimed to look for clues to understand how human ancestors shifted their habitats from forested to arid ones (Itani 1970).

Toshisada Nishida successfully habituated chimpanzees by artificial provisioning in July 1966, which was the start of the second longest-running chimpanzee research project. The food given to chimpanzees was later reduced and observational studies have been conducted without provisioning since 1987. The project was joined by many researchers including Kenji Kawanaka and Shigeo Uehara, and it has produced numerous scientific findings concerning the behaviour, ecology, and society of Mahale chimpanzees, although there is not enough space here to go into details.

In 1985, Mahale became the 11th national park of Tanzania, representing triumph for researchers who had dedicated two decades to research wildlife, especially chimpanzees, and to protect them from deforestation and other threats to survival. However, at the same time, the birth of the Mahale Mountains National Park presented dramatic societal and lifestyle changes for the Watongwe, indigenous people of Mahale. The Mahale Wildlife Conservation Society, established in 1994, has contributed to improvements in education and medical services of the local community. We believe that spontaneous involvement of the Watongwe people is crucial for environmental conservation because their ethnicity and traditional knowledge are closely connected to nature in and around Mahale.

Recently, the research team has broadened its focus beyond chimpanzees, partly as an inevitable response to modern-day demands to conserve 'biodiversity.' Leopard research has been initiated recently, whereas an interest in diurnal and nocturnal mammals that share habitats with chimpanzees is ongoing. In addition, some researchers, including Gen'ichi Idani and Hideshi Ogawa are continuing an extensive study regarding savannah-dwelling chimpanzees in Ugalla; this project was resumed in 1994 by Takayoshi Kano, who participated in a pioneer study there with Itani in 1966. A collaborative research project

to study wildlife in 'Greater Mahale'—covering a wide area including Mahale and Ugalla—is also ongoing for an integrative understanding of regional biodiversity, which is essential in terms of conservation strategies.



Figure 1. The poster for a public outreach event that will take place at the Yayoi Auditorium, University of Tokyo on 19 September 2015.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Mahale Mountains Chimpanzee Research Project, various events will be held beginning this July. First, the workshop 'Fifty years of research on wild chimpanzees: Significance and future of long-term research' will be offered at the 31st Congress of the Primate Society of Japan in Kyoto on 18 July. Second, 'Mahale 50: Exhibition and symposium' will be held as a public outreach event in Tokyo on 19 September (Figure 1). Two new books edited by Mahale researchers are expected to be released during this event: one is a thick academic volume (in English) by many researchers who have studied Mahale chimpanzees (announced in this issue for details), and the other—written in Japanese by Nakamura for general readers—provides the history of Mahale chimpanzee research. Third, the symposium 'A half-century of wild chimpanzee research: How does long-term wild ape research contribute to anthropology?' will be held in Tokyo at the 69th Congress of the Anthropological Society of Nippon on 12 October. Finally, the ceremony to celebrate the 50th anniversary of international collaboration at Mahale is being planned to take place at Kigoma, Tanzania—perhaps in November.

The next issue of *Pan Africa News* will include reviews of some of these events.

REFERENCES

- Itani J 1961. [*The Forest of Gorillas and Pigmies*.] Iwanamishoten, Tokyo, in Japanese.
 Itani J 1970. [*In the Pursuit of Chimpanzees*.] Chikumashobo, Tokyo, in Japanese.
 Izawa K 1977. [The chimpanzees of the Kasakati Basin, II.] In: [*The Chimpanzees*.] Itani J (ed). Kōdansha, Tokyo, pp. 187–248, in Japanese.

<NEWS>

Mahale 50 Book Coming Soon

Michio Nakamura¹, Kazuhiko Hosaka², Noriko Itoh¹ & Koichiro Zamma³

¹ Wildlife Research Center, Kyoto University, Japan

² Kamakura Women's University, Japan

³ Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University, Japan

(E-mail: nakamura@wrc.kyoto-u.ac.jp)

We are happy to announce here that we are finalizing a book, *Mahale Chimpanzees: 50 Years of Research*, which will soon be published from the Cambridge University Press (the publication is due in September 2015). Publication of this volume was planned in order to compile the research achievements that have been accumulated after half a century of research at Mahale.

As readers of *Pan Africa News* are well aware, the late Prof. Toshisada Nishida, the founder of chimpanzee research at Mahale, published a monograph on Mahale's chimpanzees, titled *Chimpanzees of the Lakeshore* (Nishida 2012). In the book, he described various episodes of his research life in Tanzania together with several important academic topics to which he dedicated his research career. However, the book was not intended to comprehensively cover the research topics investigated by other researchers at Mahale. Actually, he wanted to edit an encyclopedic volume about Mahale, which would complement his personal account. In the special issue of *Pan Africa News*, Emeritus Prof. Masao Kawai wrote as follows:

“Furthermore, he was preparing to compile all his longtime accomplishments into a lifework English language volume. I can hardly imagine how deeply he regretted having to go on his last journey without realizing such plans.” (Kawai 2011)

We, therefore, pursued his goal, making use of the apt opportunity of the 50th year of research at Mahale.

This coming book takes the form of an edited volume, composed of 50 chapters and seven appendices by a total of 24 authors. Each chapter summarizes the research outcomes that have been made from Mahale in addition to new unpublished data. Thus, with this single volume the reader will easily get access to the key information pub-

lished from Mahale. We also focused on the accumulation of the research effort of 50 years, thus, highlighting long-term changes in behavior wherever possible.

This is the fourth academic edited volume on Tanzanian chimpanzees by the Japanese research team. The former three volumes were published in 1977 (Itani 1977), 1990 (Nishida 1990), and 2002 (Nishida *et al.* 2002), respectively. This means each time span between publications is 12–13 years. The first and the third ones are in Japanese and the second and upcoming fourth ones are in English. Among 24 authors in the upcoming volume, none had contributed to the first book: By the time, none had yet started their careers as researchers, most of them were still in their childhood, and some were even not born yet! This shows how the current of time is.

Through compilation of the research outcomes over these 50 years, we have learned that we still have much more to know about chimpanzees. The research must go on. We hope this upcoming volume will facilitate even younger people to get interested in chimpanzees. In order to continue the Mahale research for another 50 years, we definitely need involvement of the younger generation.

REFERENCES

- Itani J (ed) 1977. [*The Chimpanzees*.] Kōdansha, Tokyo, in Japanese.
 Kawai M 2011. The passing of Professor Toshisada Nishida lamented. (translated by Hosaka K). *Pan Afr News* **18(special issue)**:1–2.
 Nishida T (ed) 1990. *The Chimpanzees of the Mahale Mountains: Sexual and Life History Strategies*. University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo.
 Nishida T 2012. *Chimpanzees of the Lakeshore: Natural History and Culture at Mahale*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
 Nishida T, Uehara S, Kawanaka K (eds) 2002. [*The Mahale Chimpanzees: Thirty-Seven Years of <Panthropology>*.] Kyoto University Press, Kyoto, in Japanese.

